

Minutes
Missouri Military Preparedness and Enhancement Commission
Special Meeting
Jefferson City, MO

March 27, 2020 – 11:00 a.m.

The meeting was held by conference call placed from the home of Joe Driskill, Jefferson City, MO, 65101, due to the special circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

MMPEC Members: Bob Hagedorn, Greg Frencken, Steve Ehrhardt, Royal Turner, Senator Wayne Wallingford, Senator Gina Walsh, Representative Steve Lynch, and Military Advocate Joe Driskill (DED Director Designee)

Guests: Mike Dubois and Hannah Stash

WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chairman Hagedorn and roll was called. A quorum was established with seven statutory members and one ex-officio member designee participating. Guests were introduced.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The approval of minutes from the March 3 special meeting has been delayed due to the nature of this meeting and will be approved at the next meeting.

REPORTS AND BRIEFINGS

Office of the Military Advocate Report – Joe Driskill started the meeting with a report on how the pandemic has affected his work. He reported that he has been working with the Department of Economic Development on a variety of issues to flatten the curve and make sure hospitals are not overrun. He reported that though things are grim at the state level, he does not believe Governor Parson will implement a statewide stay-at-home order because there are places in the state that have been affected by the virus very little. St. Louis, Springfield, Kansas City, Boone County, and Cole County are all under stay-at-home orders, and a lot of economic activities are curtailed. There are more unemployment claims than in 2008 with 3.3 million unemployment insurance claims nationwide. He said that it was first the tourism and hospitality industries that were hit hard, but now it's starting to hit manufacturing.

Driskill said that the CARES Act is important to Missouri because it contains provisions about unemployment benefits, direct checks, and business benefits. The state legislature has been working with the Governor's Office and budget planning to make sure any changes in law that are needed to receive funding are put in place. Driskill is also helping with this effort.

Driskill has been working with the department to identify critical infrastructure issues as well as monitoring the supply chain for food and the defense national security industry. Additionally, some areas in Missouri have information about who is exempt from stay-at-home orders while others do not, so they are working to determine who needs to be exempt. The department has daily briefing calls at 8:30 a.m. to report on their progress and discuss goals for the day as well as problems and solutions. The department is working with manufacturers who want to produce PPE products as well as working to identify facilities where makeshift hospitals can be located. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be in the state to help with this effort, and Driskill reports that college dorms and hotels are a major focus for them. The department has also been working to purchase ventilators and other medical equipment.

In regards to the military and defense side of his work, Joe and his team have been in contact with the military and defense industry in Missouri. The Missouri National Guard has been activated and his team is focused on making sure any issues are communicated with the governor quickly. He also reports that Lake City Army Ammunition Plant's security team is comprised of a large number of guard members, so they are worried the plant's security might be compromised with the activation of the guard. Currently, there are positive test results at Fort Leonard Wood and Whiteman Air Force Base, so both are at HPCON CHARLIE which restricts movement on and off base. There is some concern surrounding families who live off base but rely on the hospital and medical facilities on base, especially at Fort Leonard Wood where there is a large hospital. Driskill also mentioned that a team of B-2 pilots were formerly deployed to England, but now they are coming back and being quarantined on the base. There are about 200 of them that were deployed, and the base's priority is making sure that they maintain mission-ready staffing.

On the national front, Driskill has been working on Association of Defense Communities (ADC) responsibilities as well. ADC, the White Oak Partnership, and Blue Star Families, have been holding weekly calls to help out families under stress from issues like childcare. They are trying to learn the best practices from areas around the country. Driskill reports that Congress will try to hold hearings on a written question and answer basis. The state will be receiving \$3.8 million in federal stimulus funds that is divided up between state and local governments. However, cities must have a population of over 500,000 people, and since St. Louis and Kansas City don't have that many people, the money will go back to the state. Driskill said that there may be a need to enact new legislative "vehicles" to get this funding. He reported that FY 2021 will have many budget challenges.

While all of this has been going on, Driskill reports that his team is still working on its normal priorities. His executive assistant, Hannah Stash, is working on a white paper regarding educational and professional credits for military education. She has been in touch with Fort Leavenworth and has put in a lot of work to make sure the paper is well-vetted. The paper will offer some suggestions on changes in policy and how Missouri colleges and universities award credit since it's currently all over the board. An example of this issue is that soldiers who are

truck drivers at Fort Leonard Wood can easily get a professional certificate for their training, while many occupations are not able to get credits or certification that easily.

Sen. Wallingford asked about the number of infected at Fort Leonard Wood and Whiteman Air Force Base. Driskill reported that about 200 are quarantined on the installation, including Col. Jeffrey Schreiner. At Fort Leonard Wood, there are fewer individuals quarantined thanks to MG Martin taking swift action. Both installations have enough test kits. Driskill offered them state assistance and they were provided with testing supplies by the federal government.

Chairman Hagedorn asked for other questions and there were none.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business. Mike Dubois and a few others chimed in to thank Joe for his hard work.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Driskill is unsure if the commission will be able to have its regular meeting on June 2. Additionally, there are items he must provide prior to the end of the fiscal year due to the nature of his work agreement.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business on the agenda, the meeting adjourned at 11:32 a.m.